

1. FAA DECISION

This Record of Decision (ROD) provides final Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval for the Federal actions for proposed improvements at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport (Lambert), including construction and operation of a new air carrier length runway (12W/30W). The Federal actions and associated airport development are described in detail in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, dated December 1997 (FEIS). The Federal actions are considered in Section 3, Agency Actions, of this ROD. The FAA's decision is based on the information contained in the FEIS and all other applicable documents available to the FAA and considered by it, which constitute the administrative record.

This ROD is issued in accordance with the requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 CFR 1505.2. The principal features include:

- A statement of the agency's decision;
- An identification of all the alternatives considered by the FAA in reaching its decision, with a specification of the alternative or alternatives that are considered to be environmentally preferable; and
- The means adopted (mitigation measures) to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected.

Based on a review of the administrative record and the FEIS approved on December 19, 1997, it is the FAA's final determination that the revised Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for proposed improvements to Lambert, including a new air carrier-length runway, specifically described in Sections 2, 4 and 5 of this ROD, and identified in the FEIS as the "FAA's Preferred Alternative" (Alternative W-1W), is approved. This runway is designated, for planning purposes, as 12W/30W. In addition, the runway is approved as eligible for Federal financial assistance and construction.

These approvals of the ALP and eligibility for Federal funding constitute final approval. The FAA notes that the airport-project sponsor, the St. Louis Airport Authority (STLAA), has agreed to the various conditions of approval, in particular, the conditions requiring mitigation measures.

In reaching this determination, careful consideration has been given to: (a) the needs of Lambert as a part of the national air transportation system and the airport capacity/delay reduction needs through the year 2015; (b) the aviation safety and operational objectives of the project in the light of the various aeronautical factors and judgments presented and (c) the anticipated environmental impacts of the project.

The FAA has carefully considered all reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Although the “No-Action Alternative” had fewer developmental and environmental impacts than the preferred alternative and was the “environmentally preferred alternative,” it failed to achieve the purposes and needs for this project. The other reasonable development alternative, Alternative S-1, was examined in detail by the FAA and found to provide capacity and delay reduction benefits slightly higher than Alternative W-1W, at higher costs and with greater environmental impacts. Alternative W-1W is more protective than Alternative S-1 of natural resources protected under 49 U.S.C. 47016(c), park and historic resources protected under Section 303 of the Department of Transportation Act (DOT Section 303, also referred to as Section 4(f)) and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, and wetlands. For the reasons summarized in this ROD, and supported by detailed discussion in the FEIS, the FAA has determined that the agency’s preferred alternative, Alternative W-1W, is the only possible, prudent and practicable alternative.

A discussion of the leading factors considered by the FAA in reaching this decision follows.